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~ CD and DVD drives

# ReadyNetGo ... News

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<http://www.readynetgo.net>

### TIP OF THE MONTH

When choosing a computer, most people either get overwhelmed by the choices available or focus more on emotional needs rather than practical needs. It's cool to have the latest stuff, the best technology, but is it what you really **need** ...

More often than not, if you buy a system that is expandable, the latest piece of technology will come down in price in a few months potentially saving you a bundle. Purchasing external components, too, can be more efficient since you will be able to use the item on more than one computer.

When considering a new purchase, review and weigh the following factors :

- Cost
- Budget
- Performance
- Upgradeability/expandability
- Warranty & Service
- Reliability
- Ergonomics
- Aesthetics

Since cost is the overriding factor in most decisions, figure out how much you can afford, use our recommended configurations as a base and then add components accordingly. With this plan, acquiring a new computer can be a quick and painless process.

### Looking for a New Office Computer?

#### Read This Before You Buy ...

So you're in the market for a new office computer but when you look through magazines you're completely confused about what to buy. This is a pretty common occurrence with the enormous array of computer components on the market today. Do you go with a Pentium or is a Celeron processor what you need? How much RAM should you get and what's the difference between a DVD-ROM and a CD-ROM? With these questions in mind, we've put together some important factors and recommendations to consider when researching and choosing the best system.

For business applications, we recommend the following for a desktop computer that is networked and is working in conjunction with a server:

<u>Processor/ speed:</u>	Pentium III/ 800 MHz
<u>Hard drive:</u>	10 GB
<u>RAM:</u>	128 MB
<u>Operating System:</u>	MS Windows 98se/ME/WIN2000
<u>Application:</u>	MS Office 2000
<u>Network Card:</u>	10/100 PCI NIC (Intel or 3-Com)
<u>Video Card:</u>	AGP or PCI Graphics Card
<u>CD-ROM Drive:</u>	32x Max or greater
<u>Monitor:</u>	17" or 19" (1280 x 1024; .27mm)
<u>Extras:</u>	Zip drive, CD-RW Drive, Sound card & speakers, DVD-ROM

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### WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. [www.allbookstores.com](http://www.allbookstores.com) - search engine for books
2. [www.pcguide.com](http://www.pcguide.com) - detailed explanations of how a computer works; very readable
3. [www.pricegrabber.com](http://www.pricegrabber.com) - pick a product; choose a vendor with the lowest price
4. [www.gorp.com](http://www.gorp.com) - excellent site for finding great outdoor recreation areas for PA and elsewhere
5. [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) - guide to State Parks around PA

## Explanation of Recommendations

**Processors** are constructed of semi-conductor material. The differences between processors is determined by how the material is arranged. Pentium machines are more reliable and faster than Intel Celeron while AMD Athlon is becoming a close contender. Celeron processors work well for internet/email use but if you're looking to do more complex tasks, you're better suited with a Pentium or AMD Athlon. Pentium processors are well suited for applications requiring advanced mathematical computations such as spreadsheets, databases, graphics programs, games and others.

The speed of the processor allows your computer to complete multiple tasks simultaneously. Generally, the faster your processor, the more tasks you can get done at the same time. The quality of the processor and other components in the machine will impact speed however. Ex: a 700 MHz Pentium III will work faster and be able to carry out more complex tasks than a 700 MHz celeron.

**Hard drives** are expanding rapidly; you'd be hard pressed to find a computer with less than 10 GB. At this time, if most of your data is on the server, you don't need a hard drive larger than 20 GB which will only be used to store your application software.

For **RAM**, 128 MB is recommended to allow your computer to run multiple programs simultaneously. For internet/email, 64 - 96 MB is satisfactory. For higher end machines running graphics or development programs, 256 MB is optimal.

A **networking card** is required unless you work alone and need only one computer.

Every machine needs a **CD-ROM drive** to load and access software. For media buffs, a DVD-ROM can serve the same purpose as a CD-ROM but can also play DVD movies & multi-media presentations. You'll have to decide if the extra cost is worth it.

There's also an option for a CD-RW (CD rewritable) drive. Since each CD can hold approximately 650 MB, CD-RW drives can be used for limited file backups or storage of infrequently used data. CD-RW drives are more expensive but they can provide a lot of value if you don't want to store data on your hard drive. Another option is a combination CD-RW/DVD-ROM which will be discussed in the July newsletter.

Finally, a **Zip drive** is another option for storage. Zip drives are valuable for their ease of transferring files and backing up data (disk capacity is 100 MB or 250 MB). Their low cost and ubiquity make them an excellent add-on component.

## Comparing CDs and DVDs - Basic Information

- CD-ROM drives – can read data only. Storage capacity is 650 MB.
- CD-R drives – can read and write data once. No longer being produced for the general public because of their limitations but you can still buy CD-R disks.
- CD-RW (CD re-writable) drives – can read and write data to a CD multiple times.
- DVD-ROM drives (Digital Video Disks) – can read CDs and DVDs. Holds 4.7 GB per side/single layer, 8.5 GB on a dual layer disk and up to 17 GB on a double sided disk (equals 25 CD-ROMs).
- DVD-RAM drives – Newest technology; can read CDs and DVDs and write to DVDs as well.

There are many more differences so stay tuned for next months newsletter!